

## TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT

### FOR 3-4 YEARS OLD:

- \* Begins to play with other children.
- \* Shares toys and takes turns.
- \* Tests limits.
- \* Develops sense of humor.
- \* Dresses, toilets, and eats with little help.
- \* May develop fears.

### FOR 4-5 YEARS OLD:

- \* Plays cooperatively.
- \* Understands authority, but still tests limits.
- \* Participates in group activities.
- \* Chooses friends.
- \* Is sensitive about teasing. Understands routines.

## TIPS FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

As a caregiver, you must be creative, prepared, diligent and consistent in dealing with behavior. Think about the individual needs of the child. Consider the following tips:

1. The rule for time out is 1 minute per year of age for the child; 3 years old=3 minutes.
2. Remain calm, especially during challenging situations.
3. After giving a direction, ask the child to restate the direction to make sure they understand.
4. Simplify your language. Lengthy explanations or multiple directions can be confusing to a young child.
5. When trying new strategies, behaviors will often get worse before getting better.
6. Frequently reinforce positive behavior.
7. Be consistent and request that family and friends work with you as a team!

## KEY MILESTONES FOR POSITIVE SOCIAL EMOTIONAL SKILLS & BEHAVIOR

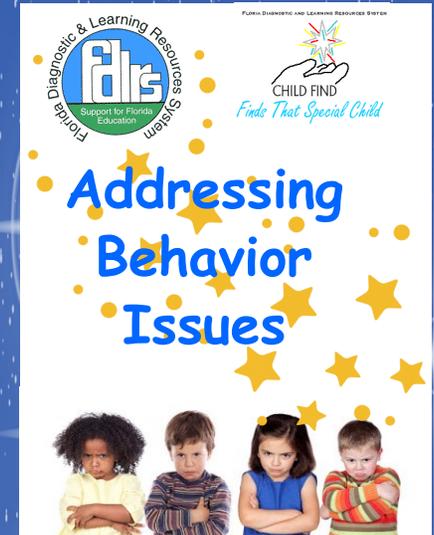
- \* Following rules, understanding limitations and routines.
- \* Performing tasks.
- \* Interacting with peers and adults.
- \* Coping with challenges.
- \* Using self-help skills.
- \* Expressing needs and wants.

## INDICATIONS OF AT RISK BEHAVIOR OR DELAYED SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The parent/guardian may want to discuss any concerns with a physician, counselor, or other professional for screening and/or evaluation if his/her child:

- \* Does not play with, communicate or show interest in other children or adults.
- \* Exhibits sudden behavior changes or mood swings.
- \* Is destructive or aggressive to self and others.
- \* Is extremely active or unusually quiet.
- \* Is very defiant or has frequent temper tantrums.
- \* Loses earlier developmental skills such as toileting, language, motor, etc..

The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System is funded by the State of Florida, Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Educational Evaluation and Student Services, through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, Preschool; and State General Revenue funds.



If you are concerned about a child's development, complete the Child Find Referral Form (age 3 to 5 years old) at [fdlrsgalaxy.org](http://fdlrsgalaxy.org) or call 772-429-4601

Preschool children, ages 3 to 5 years, not yet enrolled in a public school, are eligible to participate in a FREE Child Find preschool screening.

**FDLRS Galaxy**

**Serving the Treasure Coast: Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, & St. Lucie Counties**

# ADDRESSING BEHAVIOR ISSUES IN YOUNG CHILDREN

## ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE POSITIVE SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL BEHAVIOR

- Provide a safe, peaceful, and supervised environment.
- Set up cooperative play situations for two children or an adult and child, such as, throwing a ball or a pretend tea party.
- Arrange “play dates.”
- Teach simple games, such as, Candyland, Simon Says, Freeze Tag, etc.,
- Respond joyfully to child’s joke.
- Describe desired positive behavior and have consistent expectations such as, “Walk in the house.” or “Hold my hand in the parking lot.”
- Set limits on behavior and explain why it’s a necessity, such as “Wearing a seat belt keeps us safe in the car.”
- Help children solve social problems by sharing their feelings. Providing them prompts such as, “Tell him you don’t like \_\_\_\_\_.”
- Help children develop strategies for solving social problems, by saying things such as, “Use your words” and “What could you say next time?”
- Establish consistent routines. This helps children understand when and how things will happen. When a child knows what will happen next and what is expected from him/her, many difficult situations can be avoided, especially in morning and bedtime routines.

- Try to schedule a favorite activity after an activity your child dislikes; such as “After we wash your hair, you can play with bubbles.”



## PREVENTION STRATEGIES

These strategies can help prevent or reduce challenging behavior from occurring.

1. **Using a positive statement to tell your child what you want them to do.** Say “Walk “instead of “Stop running,” Say “Put your toys in the box and your books on the shelf” instead of “Clean your room.”
2. **Giving choices.** Limit choices to 2-3, but allow your child the opportunity to make choices. Make sure the choices you give lead to similar and desirable outcomes. Example of choices; sandals or tennis shoes?, milk or juice?, bath or shower? **NOT** eat dinner or play outside?, eat a snack or clean up your toys?.
3. **Using picture/objects to communicate limits.** Use pictures to explain the steps of your routine. Label bins or shelves for specific items. Use baby gates or “stop signs” to designate off limit areas.
4. **Teaching replacement skills.** When you would like to eliminate a child’s challenging behavior, you must teach an appropriate behavior for the child to use instead. Teach the replacement behavior during a time when the child is **NOT** having a problem. The new behavior must work as quickly and effectively as the challenging behavior. If your child screams and cries to leave the table, teach him/her a simple request such as, “All done.” When the child says, “All done,” give praise for performing the behavior and allow the child to leave the table.

## CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Challenging behaviors are repetitive behaviors which interfere with optimal learning and interaction in social situations. These behaviors are not typical for a child’s age. (Prolonged temper tantrums, aggressive behavior, disruptive behavior , etc.).

**HOW DO I KNOW IF I SHOULD WORRY ABOUT MY CHILD’S BEHAVIOR?** All children will display behavior at some time which can challenge their families and caregivers. Some behaviors may be typical for the child’s age or temperament (shy, quiet, very active, etc.). Occasionally, challenging behavior may be the result of developmental delays or learning concerns. Disciplining young children is an opportunity to teach appropriate social and emotional behaviors.

## A CHILD MIGHT EXHIBIT CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS BECAUSE HE/SHE...

1. **Has limited communication skills**—A child who does not have language to communicate can be easily frustrated and might cry or hit to communicate.
2. **Lacks social skills**—A child who does not know how to share or interact with others might push a peer or grab a toy instead of asking for an item or taking turns.
3. **Gains needs or wants**—A child might scream to get a drink, cry to get a diaper change, or pull a parent’s arm to get attention.
4. **Avoids something**—A child might get removed from the table for screaming to avoid eating non-preferred food or throw a tantrum to avoid cleaning up toys.

